



Speech by

# Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Thursday, 8 March 2007

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### International Women's Day

**Hon. MM KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women) (10.07 am): Today is International Women's Day, a day when women around the world celebrate our achievements and join together to work for a better future. I thank all members who are wearing their green and purple ribbons in celebration and recognition of women in Queensland.

I was reminded this week of how lucky women are here in Queensland after hearing from Malalai Joya—at 27 years of age, Afghanistan's youngest member of parliament. Everyone who heard this brave young woman speak of her fight for democracy was moved by her courage in speaking out against the war lords and drug barons controlling her country. She spoke of ongoing oppression and horrific treatment of women in Afghanistan—a true reminder of what International Women's Day is all about. It is about making life better for women all over the world, by fighting for their rights and for equality.

The Beattie government is committed to making things better for Queensland women. Our theme for this year's International Women's Day is 'Women at work: know your rights, it's your future'. With this in mind we have created a host of exciting new initiatives for women and girls. The first is our new 'industry challenge', where we will be offering cash incentives to businesses that make it easier for women to balance their work and life.

The Women in Hard Hats strategy and our Science, Engineering and Technology Action Plan are designed to improve representation of women in the science, engineering and technology fields by raising awareness of these careers and industries among women; encouraging partnerships; and helping women to move between education, training and employment. The Women on Boards strategy is aimed at increasing the number of women on boards in both government and the private sector.

Finally, we have our workplace negotiation skills seminar series kicking off in April. These are hands-on seminars designed to give women the real life skills they need to make sure they get what they want in the workplace.

On International Women's Day 2007 we celebrate the significant achievements of Queensland women. But, listening to Malalai Joya's story, this parliament is reminded that women's fight for a life free from violence and equality in the workplace must continue.